Latifa Babas, “History: Isaac De Razilly or the French admiral at the origin of a civil war in Morocco,” *Yabiladi*, Posted 03/12/2019.
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In 1629, the member of the French navy Isaac De Razilly sailed to Morocco to free Christian subjects, reduced to slaves by the corsairs of Salé. De Razilly ended up imposing a blockade on the Republic of Salé, resulting in an internal civil war that would weaken the pirates.

Isaac De Razilly was a member of the French Navy, a noble man who made several voyages, notably to Morocco with colonial ambitions in the 17th century. Under the orders of King Louis VIII of France, who reigned from 1610 to 1643, De Razilly went to the Cherifian kingdom as part of a military observation mission in 1619.

A few years later, the French knight returned to Morocco a second time, and more precisely to Salé to free Christian subjects reduced to slaves by the legendary corsairs of the city. Unfortunately, De Razilly's mission in Morocco was not so innocent. Once near the Bouregreg river, which separates the current city of Rabat from its twin Salé, the real mission of De Razilly will be revealed and a civil war will ravage these cities, however flourishing thanks to piracy.

The embargo at the origin of a civil war

De Razilly's trip was fully commented on by George Joffe, professor at the University of Cambridge. In his book entitled " North Africa: nation, state and region " (Editions Routledge, 2015), the writer explained that De Razilly had gone to Sale, not only to free French slaves, but also to end to the activities of Moroccan privateers.

"If the corsairs generally spared the English and the Dutch, they ravaged Spanish and French maritime transport and the towns located on the coasts of these two countries, bringing the booty and captives back to Rabat", writes the British professor.

In other words, the French admiral traveled to North Africa to do what Spain could not and "react" to the persistent threat from the corsairs of Salé.

Razilly's voyage to the Moroccan coast began on June 27, 1629. According to the same book, the Frenchman "*sailed to Morocco with ten ships, with orders to obtain the release of French captives*". Once in Rabat, De Razilly is faced with the objection of the Diwan (council), a government ruled the Republic of Salé (1624-1668).

According to the memoir of Isaac De Razilly, cited by Leila Maziane in “ Salé et ses corsaires, 1666-1727 ” (Editions Univ Rouen Havre, 2008), this “*vice-admiral [claimed that] - 6,000 Christians were captured by the Saletine corsairs between 1618 and 1626* ”.

On his arrival, the "*Diwan in Rabat refused to deal with Razilly unless he presented them with arms and money*," continues George Joffe. **The executive of the Republic of Salé would have requested 100 cannons and a million pounds before releasing the captives. This demand will provoke the anger of De Razilly who then deploys his ships and imposes a siege on the two port cities. His "*squadron had seized and set fire to seven privateer ships after a month and a half of blockade*".**

In addition, the French would also have succeeded, without paying a single cent, to free a considerable number of French and Spanish subjects captured by the corsairs of Salé and even Moroccan captives.

A blockade that weakens the Republic of Corsairs

The blockade of De Razilly in the 17th century would have weakened the Republic of Bouregreg and **led to a civil war between Salé and Rabat**. As **George Joffe** ***(makes many unsupported statements)*** had pointed out, civil war had broken out because of "*the losses inflicted by De Razilly and his squadron, the shortage of foodstuffs caused by the blockade and Diwan's refusal to deal with the French admiral*".

In fact, the blockade which will last several months had tightened the noose on the inhabitants who were highly dependent on their maritime activities. By sealing off the two towns, Isaac De Razilly had prevented English and Dutch traders from entering the port and even privateers from bringing in supply ships from Assilah.

Faced with the heavy economic and social fallout following the De Razilly blockade, the Diwan decided to wave the white flag and finally negotiate a truce with the French.

On October 2, 1629, De Razilly and the Diwan of the Republic of Salé signed a five-month truce. "*The conditions included the release of all French captives at Salé, the end of the French blockade and harassment against the ships of Rabat-Salé, the end of privateer raids against the French as well as free trade privileges for the French at Salty and for privateers in France*, "Joffe wrote. *What is the source for this? It is wholly incorrect.*

At the end of the blockade, the corsairs of Salé will no longer be as before. The size of their fleet had shrunk sharply and the number of privateers operating for the Diwan had drastically decreased. ***WRONG***